

• THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION'S •

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ADMINISTRATION

2008

EXCELLENCE  
IN  
RIGHT-OF-WAY  
AWARDS

• EXCELLENCE IN RIGHT-OF-WAY AWARDS •

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# Congratulations to the Winners of the 2008 Excellence in Right-of-Way Awards

Congratulations to the winners of the 2008 Excellence in Right-of-Way Awards and all who were nominated for these awards. This biennial awards program was developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to honor those who excel in improving the real property acquisition process while ensuring that property owners' and tenants' rights are protected. The awards recognize outstanding innovations that enhance the right-of-way professional's ability to meet the challenges associated with acquiring real property for a Federal-aid project.



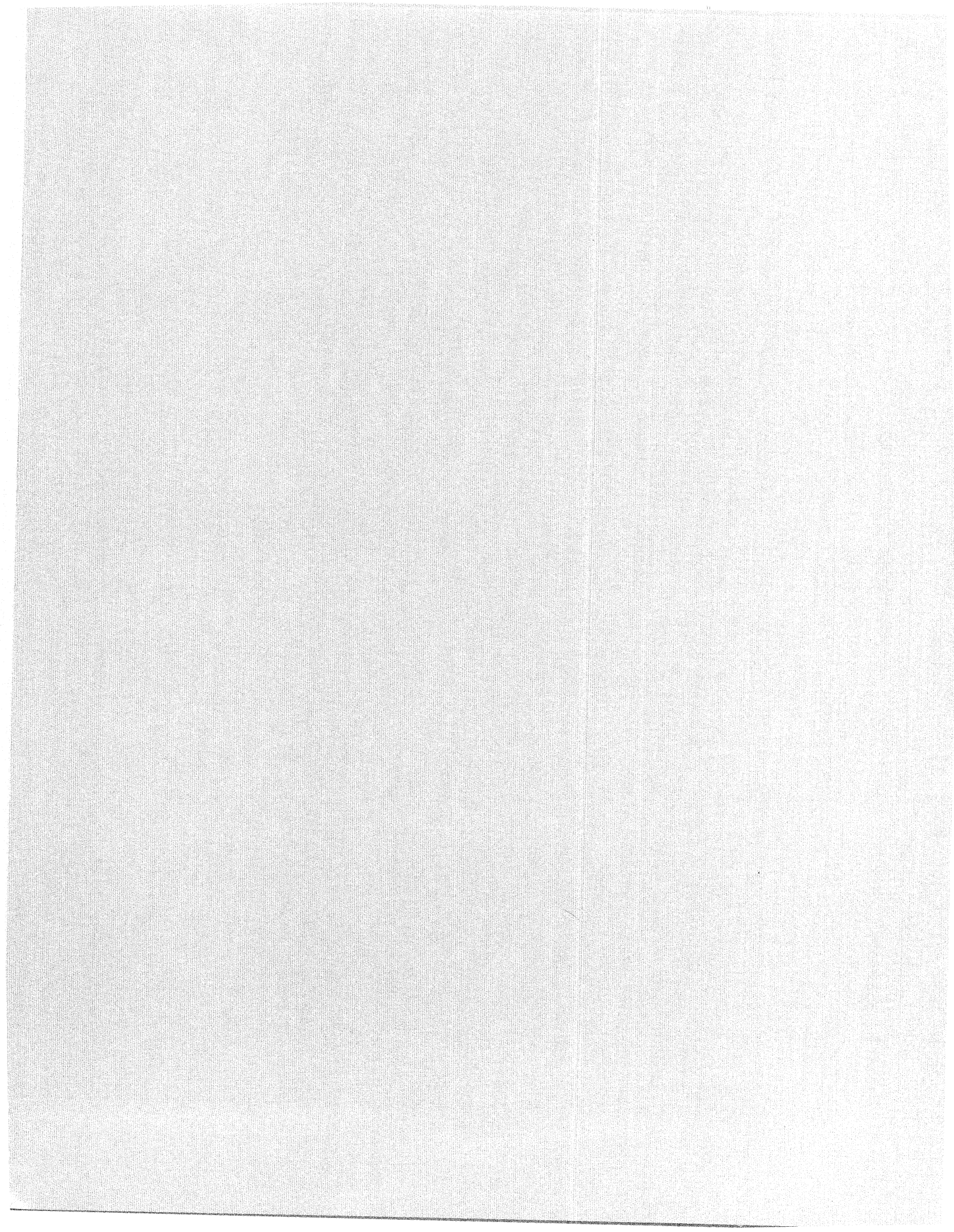
This year, FHWA received several compelling entries describing Innovation, Leadership, Stewardship, Streamlining and Integration and Technical Specialties from around the country. The winners in the five categories demonstrated successful methods to effectively and efficiently purchase and manage right-of-way in their states. The recipients will be honored during the 2008 FHWA and AASHTO Subcommittee on Right-of-Way and Utilities annual meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In this brochure, you will read about how technology assists the right-of-way process as well as see how important communication, teamwork and hands-on assistance add to the field of right-of-way. Our goal with this program is to spotlight and share great ideas from around the country that will benefit the right-of-way community and the public.

Once again, I would like to congratulate all of the winners in the 2008 Excellence in Right-of-Way Awards. Thank you for developing such innovative ways to meet the challenges of acquiring real property and serving the public.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gloria M. Shepherd".

Gloria Shepherd  
Associate Administrator for  
Planning, Environment and Realty





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# Leadership Award

## Texas Department of Transportation

This Award recognizes the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), The Turnpike Right of Way Authority Division, HDR Engineering and PBS&J for their commitment and dedication to the Central Texas Turnpike Project (CTTP). The TxDOT, Turnpike Authority Division Right-of-Way Section is in the final stages of Right-of-Way (ROW) acquisition on approximately 65 miles of roadway located in Central Texas—one of the fastest growing areas in the United States. This project represents about 700 parcels and 359 relocations at an estimated ROW cost of \$690 million, making it currently one of the largest transportation projects in the Nation.

One of the unique aspects of the Central Texas Turnpike design/build projects is that the environmental, property acquisition (including appraisal and relocation), and the design and construction activities were undertaken simultaneously under one central location known as the Central Texas Turnpike Project Office (CTTP). The co-location and partner concept included representatives from the Texas Attorney General and the Federal Highway Administration. The inclusion of all the transportation disciplines prevented problems from occurring or minimized the impacts of issues that did occur. The inclusion of the right-of-way discipline into the design decision-making process has limited damages by minimizing access denial and other design issues to the remainder of the properties. Many of the unique right-of-way processes TxDOT implemented on these projects, such as the Possession and Use Agreement (allows for the use of the property for construction prior to closing), are now becoming the standard on traditional TxDOT projects.

The success of the CTTP and the Turnpike Right-of-Way section has allowed TxDOT senior management to look at the CTTP as a model on which to base and manage future large scale projects. The major accomplishments for the CTTP are further evidenced by the several hundred officials, dignitaries and international transportation professionals who have toured the CTTP model.

*Contributors:*

Donald C. Toner, Jr., SR/WA, Kerry Fulton, SR/WA,  
Teri Morgan, SR/WA, John P. Hearn and John Breed.



Leadership Honorable Mention Award

Steve Damron

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Division of Right-of-Way



This Honorable Mention Award recognizes Steve Damron and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Division of Right-of-Way for being proactive in avoiding critical staff shortages of branch managers and skilled staff positions due to several simultaneous retirements.

Due to retirement incentives, Mr. Damron knew the Division would need to be proactive to address staff shortages since more than half the remaining staff statewide would qualify to retire. Personnel laws in the State of Kentucky will not allow the hiring of personnel prior to announced retirements of current employees. Mr. Damron used the Cabinet's partnership with the University of Kentucky Transportation Center along with a \$15,000 grant from the State Association of State Highway and

Transportation Official (SASHTO) and led the division in setting up a co-op program from fifteen college seniors; drawing students from the colleges and universities close to the 12 district right-of-way offices. Twelve students were hired to learn the various aspects of right-of-way and three students were hired specifically to train as appraisers. The students are paid an hourly rate for their work in the District Offices and with satisfactory performance for the first semester they are offered a bonus for a commitment to work for the Cabinet as a full-time employee upon graduation.

Those 15 students will benefit from being trained by long-term, knowledgeable personnel and will be valuable, viable additions to the District staff. This program will help offset expected retirements with trained personnel. The program is being refined to continue indefinitely, with six to eight students per year and a full tuition-based scholarship.



## Stewardship Award

### Maryland Department of Transportation

This Award recognizes the Maryland State Highway Administration (MDSHA) District Three, District Four, District Five offices, the Special Acquisitions Division, and the Office of Counsel for keeping all the Intercounty Connector Project's (ICC) acquisition activities in-house.

The ICC project has been on the books of the MDSHA for more than 50 years; it is a mega-project and one of the most challenging in recent years. The ICC Project is a proposed 18-mile, \$3 billion highway project to increase mobility and safety in Maryland.

Over the last ten years, staff at MDSHA was reduced, and due to attrition, many years of staff experience was lost. Consequently, the MDSHA and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) determined that to be certain the project could be accomplished using only MDSHA right-of-way staff, a process review was necessary and beneficial. The review also set out to identify if MDSHA had the capacity and the resources to handle the acquisition and relocation for this mega project. The process review's mission was to highlight best practices, address concerns and offer suggestions for improvement. The Maryland Division, representatives from FHWA Headquarters Office of Real Estate, the Right-of-Way Officer from North Carolina, and a representative from MDSHA completed a week-long review.



In June 2006, the MDSHA was given the authorization to proceed with acquisition activities for the ICC. The project was divided into 5 sections (A, B, C, D and E) with A, B and C being the ones with the most acquisitions and the most aggressive schedules. Contract A was the most intensive of all, with approximately 80 percent of the acquisitions. All offers were made within six months. Residents who required relocation assistance

under Contract A were either relocated or given authorization to stay, but with a commitment for their moving date. Ultimately, Contract A was completed on schedule and under budget.

*Contributors:*

Lisa Sigwart and Staff, Donald Wakefield and Staff, Tom Hinchliffe and Staff, John Webster, Oscar Bedolla and Wilson T. Ballard Company.





## Innovation Award

### Florida Department of Transportation

This Award recognizes the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Three personnel from Right-of-Way Survey and Mapping, Appraisal, Acquisition, Legal and the Administrative Offices for their insight in preserving 3,907 acres in right-of-way corridor. This resulted in the preservation of 35 future transportation projects in Northwest Florida.

The Department's District Three Office, located in Chipley, Florida, is responsible for developing and implementing transportation plans for that region of the state. The District recognized that many future transportation facilities would be needed to accommodate the rapid growth of that part of the state. Additionally, several of the Department's future road projects would be required to cross the ownership of the St. Joe Company. The St. Joe Company, for internal reasons, found it necessary to expeditiously sell some of their holding. The District Three Right-of-Way Team, with the support and assistance of Central Office recognized the opportunity to acquire property for future transportation use.

The District Three Right-of-Way Office mobilized key personnel and prioritized their work to draw and identify general future corridor locations on area maps, drafted legal descriptions, identified lands to be appraised, prepared for and conducted fee appraisal contract selection, prepared and reviewed the appraisal, made the offers, negotiated the purchase, and drafted and executed the real estate contracts. The contracts were accomplished in record time with excellence, cooperation and teamwork. The total equitable purchase amounted to \$46,000,000 for 3,907 acres of vacant land, located in ten different counties of northwest Florida. By acquiring equitable title to these corridor tracts of vacant land prior to their improvement and development, and the expected increase in acquisition cost of such development, the expected savings is estimated to be tens of millions of dollars in transportation cost on future projects.

*Contributors:*

Tom Bowen, Bob Burdick,  
Ira Carter, John Duncan,  
Scott Golden, Grant Miles,  
Eddy Rudd, Ken Towcimak and  
Kathleen Woodham.





## Streamlining and Integration Award

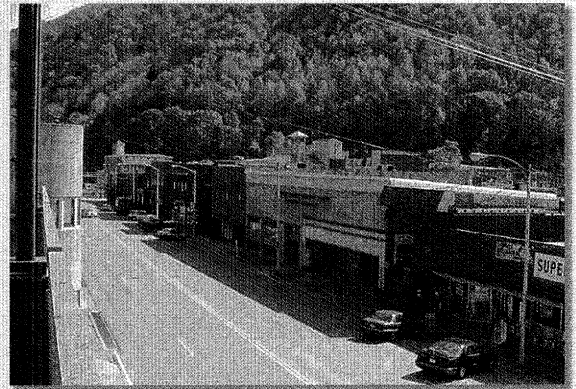
### Virginia Department of Transportation

This Award recognized the efforts of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) in identifying the critical elements for the success of the Town of Grundy Project.

Major flooding occurred in the Town of Grundy, located in Southwestern Virginia in 1937, 1957, 1977 and 1984. Because the flood of 1977 nearly destroyed the Town and there was a threat of future flood damage, many businesses did not reopen and the building that housed those businesses was abandoned. It was eventually decided that the best solution was to relocate most of the town to a higher elevation. The Grundy Flood Control Project was a collaborative effort between the VDOT, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Town of Grundy.

This project displaced 74 families, numerous businesses and non-profit organizations which represented 90 percent of the functional portion of Grundy. The relocations included the police department, town and governmental offices, educational facilities, law firms, automobile dealerships, churches, supporting commercial businesses and families.

A critical element for the success of this project involved overcoming the stigma of change compounded by years of planning and continuous construction delays. The atmosphere of apprehension was overcome through the development of business relationships, town meetings, and the partnership between the Town of Grundy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and VDOT.



*Contributors:*

Curt Jackson, Jack Barrow, Michael Black, Celeste Matney, and Sandy Smith.

*Key Staff:*

Tampa Bay Engineering Group, John McCracken and Associates and Chuck Crabtree.



Streamlining and Integration  
Honorable Mention Award

## Texas Department of Transportation

This Honorable Mention Award recognizes the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), The Turnpike Right-of-Way Authority Division, HDR Engineering (Teri Morgan) and PBS&J (John P. Hearn).

This Award recognizes the largest transportation design build project in the Nation at this time. The decision to create an all-inclusive transportation discipline system, such as the Central Texas Turnpike Project Office (CTTP) for this project and include representatives from the Texas Attorney General's office and the Federal Highway Administration helped integrate and streamline the processes. This streamlined process helped minimize the impacts of issues that could have affected delivery and construction schedules and helped avoid possible delay penalties in the amount of \$50,000 per day.

Under TxDOT's watchful eye, more than 2,000 public-private professionals have lent their expertise on these projects. Due to local participation in the amount of \$220 million for right-of-way acquisition, The Texas Turnpike Authority partnered with the Local Public Agencies to review and comment on appraisals and to attend Administrative Settlement meetings.

*Contributors:*

Donald C. Toner, Jr., Kerry Fulton, SR/WA, Teri Morgan, SR/WA, John P. Hearn and John Breed.





## Technical Specialties Award

### Oregon Department of Transportation

This Award recognizes the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Right-of-Way Division for the creation of the Right-of-Way Data Management System (RWDMS).

The creation of the RWDMS has taken the State's Property Management database system to a more efficient level. The old system was inefficient and did not provide an accurate account of the State's surplus property. Out of 110,000 right-of-way-files, only 18,000 of them were maintained on the old database system. The other 92,000 files were stored on microfiche or paper files.

After two and one-half years of work, the ODOT has an Asset Management system that is accurate and efficient. It provides the State right-of-way staff with immediate access to program information right from their work areas, using the ODOT's Intranet and FileNet programs. This RWDMS was such a success that the Oregon Legislature has allocated an additional \$4 million to continue with the next phase of the project—Phase 2 that will automate the acquisition process, such as appraisal, negotiation and the title/closing processes. The completion of Phase 2 will give the public and contractors access to certain summary property information and forms via the Internet. As a result of the RWDMS, which provides an accurate account of surplus property, the ODOT, through surplus property sales, generated \$14.8 million in revenue for the State Highway Transportation Fund.

*Contributors:*

Dee Jones, Mike Kirby, Mike Stone, and Tony Sutton.

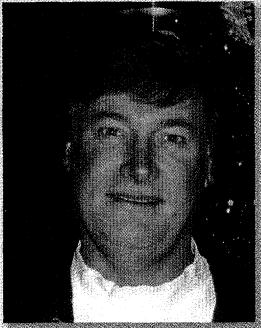


Judges



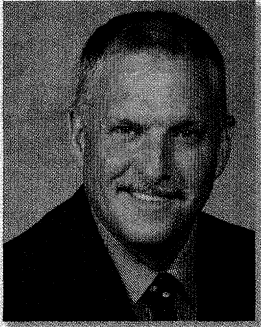
**Joe Edwards**

Mr. Edwards retired in June 2006 as Field Services Team Leader for FHWA's Headquarters Office of Real Estate Services after 34 years of Federal service with Right-of-Way assignments in multiple offices. In 1988, he served as Right-of-Way Officer for the New Mexico Division for 18 years, specializing in real estate valuation and obtaining certification from the New Mexico Board of Appraisers. Mr. Edwards advocated the State's efforts to apply information technology to its Right-of-Way program and was instrumental in coordinating Transportation Program initiatives with Federal, State, Local and Tribal agencies.



**Gary C. Fells**

Mr. Fells, a retired Colorado DOT (CDOT) Statewide Right-of-Way Program Manager, began his Right-of-Way career with CDOT Highways in 1979 as an Engineering Aide; in 1982, he was promoted to a ROW Agent in the Statewide Acquisition section; in 2000, he was selected as the Region 6 (Denver Metro area) ROW Supervisor, and in 2004, he was promoted to Statewide Right-of-Way Program Manager. Mr. Fells served as the primary liaison among the CDOT Regions, Federal Highway Administration, the Colorado Attorney General's office, and CDOT program specialty units on policy and procedure, work coordination and project schedule and priorities.



**Clyde B. Johnson, SR/WA, R/W - RAC**

Mr. Johnson retired from the Federal Highway Administration in 2005 and served as the Director of Real Estate Services for TBE Group for two years. He started in Right-of-Way with the Georgia Department of Transportation in 1973 and served in the Office of Real Estate Services, Washington Office, from 1998 through 2002. He was responsible for the FHWA's National Training Program, the Highway Beautification Program, and Uniform Act compliance. He is a certified instructor for the NHI and the International Right-of-Way Association. He received the IRWA's Frank C. Balfour "Professional of the Year" Award in 1995. Mr. Johnson received his BBA and MBA degrees in Real Estate from Georgia State University.

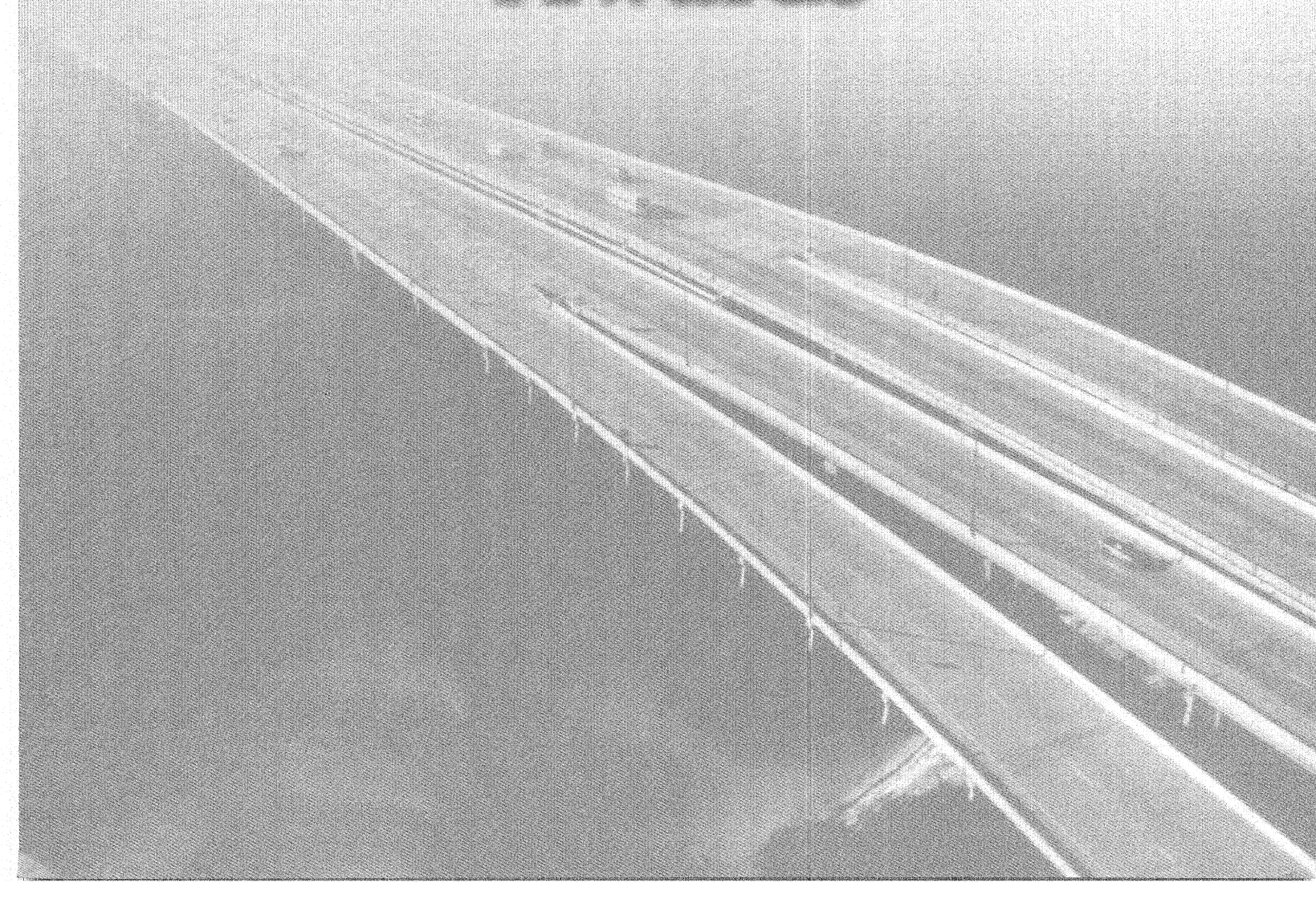


**Faith A. Roland, SR/WA**

Ms. Roland spent the past 14 years in the Right-of-Way profession as Project Manager and Acquisition Supervisor for public land acquisitions within King County, WA, prior to establishing the Northwest office as Senior Project Manager for Overland, Pacific & Cutler, Inc. Among her right-of-way expertise areas Ms. Roland is an expert at large scale, multi-parcel acquisitions, especially those involving complex title analysis and railbanking, as well as rails to trails conversions. She mentored and trained staff on the ethics and standards required by local, state and federal regulations and procedures. Ms. Roland managed and completed approximately \$200 million in voluntary land transactions, acquiring or preserving over 110,000 acres of public land within Washington. She is active in the International Right-of-Way Association with a Senior Right-of-Way (SR/WA) designation, and now serves as International President-elect on its Executive Board of Directors.

2008 AASHTO  
Subcommittee Conference

Excellence in  
Right-of-Way  
Awards



For more information about the Office of Real Estate Services, please visit our Web site at:

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